

2026

**COHORT 13
GRADUATION**

**MEMORIAL ART GALLERY
APRIL 20, 2026**



**VOICES OF IMPACT:
FAMILIES LEADING CHANGE**

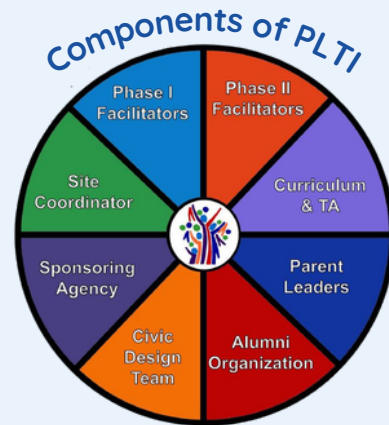
PLTI MISSION

The mission of the Greater Rochester Parent Leadership Training Institute is to build bridges and advocacy skills to support parents becoming leading advocates for children. PLTI differentiates itself by embracing a cross-race, cross-class, and parent-informed, pro-social educational approach.

PLTI Program At-A-Glance

Parents complete 21 weeks of training built on interactive adult-learning practices:

- Retreat to develop group and define mission.
- 10 weeks of parent leadership coursework focused on voice, difference, values, and problem definition.
- 10 weeks of parent leadership coursework focused on how change occurs for children including best practice, data analysis, model policy.
- A community project that highlights skills honed from PLTI involvement.
- Over 200 PLTI alumni continue to do the important advocacy work they honed with their cohort.



VALUES AND BELIEFS

1

We trust parents.

Parent voice has impact. Parental expertise and insight add a powerful perspective to decision-making

2

Civil discourse promotes understanding.

We encourage and create environments for respectful discussions that support the common good.

3

There is a place for everyone at the PLTI table.

We are intentionally diverse by race, income, geography, gender, religion, and political ideology. Diversity adds value.

4

Continual learning drives change.

Learning is essential for making change for our children and for the health of our democracy. We are curious, we listen well, and we ask good questions.

5

Public institutions should work for all people.

Informed, engaged civic leaders drive change for the good of everyone in the community.



Congratulations!
¡Felicidades!

FROM THE PLTI DIRECTOR

On behalf of Greater Rochester PLTI, I offer my heartfelt congratulations to each of you on your graduation. This moment reflects your commitment, resilience, and the energy you have brought to this journey every step of the way.

Thank you for stepping into the role of leaders and advocates for children in our community, especially your own. Your willingness to learn, grow, and lead has strengthened not only your own families, but our entire community. This milestone is not the end, but the start of what comes next. Move forward with confidence, curiosity, and the knowledge that your voice and leadership matter.

As you begin this next chapter, know that PLTI remains part of your network and support system. We are proud to walk alongside you and look forward to seeing the impact you will continue to make.

Congratulations again on this well-earned achievement. Wishing you continued growth, purpose, and success.

Warmly,



LUVA ALVAREZ
DIRECTOR

FROM THE CIVIC DESIGN TEAM CHAIR



Dear Cohort 13,

On behalf of the Civic Design Team, I offer my heartiest congratulations on completing the program! You did it! Your accomplishment deserves to be celebrated.

What you achieved was not easy:

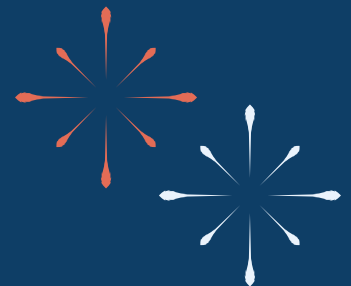
- Committing to 21 weeks of long Monday evenings
- Leaning into difficult topics and passionate conversations
- Staying on track with a community project.
- Balancing your personal responsibilities while investing in your ability to improve our community.

As a Cohort 2 graduate, I know firsthand the commitment, energy, and courage required to see this through and navigate the challenges along the way. Congratulations on the completion of this phase of your journey. We are so proud of you!

Best regards,



ERIKA ROSENBERG
CDT CHAIR



THANK YOU TO OUR CIVIC DESIGN TEAM

Executive Committee

- Chair - Erika Rosenberg, PLTI Alumna, Cohort 2; Center for Governmental Research
- Vice Chair - Tyler Brown, Monroe County
- Treasurer - James Payne, PLTI Alumnus, Cohort 9; BOCES 2
- Secretary - Kathryn Copeland, PLTI Alumna, Cohort 10

Members-at-Large

- Toyin Anderson-Willis, PLTI Alumna, Cohort 1; Action for a Better Community
- Monica Graham, PLTI Alumna, Cohort 9
- Clayton H Osborne, True Insights Consulting LLC
- Tamara Wall, PLTI Alumna, Cohort 11; Common Room



PROGRAM

PROCESSIONAL - COHORT 13 CLASS OF 2026

WELCOME

Erika Rosenberg | Cheryl Wearen

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Katie Thomas, MK Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence

GREETINGS & CONGRATULATIONS

Representative from NYS Assemblymember Demond Meeks' Office - Saúl Maneiro Chief of Staff
Representative from Monroe County Executive Adam Bello's Office - Josie McClary, Cohort 10
Mayor Malik Evans, City of Rochester

NATIONAL PARENT LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE PRESENTATION

Zulema Gomez

SPOKEN WORD POEM "VOICES IN BLOOM"

Willie Williams, Cohort 11

GUEST SPEAKER

Stephanie Paredes, DEIB Operations Manager, Coordinated Care Services, Inc.

CLTI PRESENTATION

Mildrena Vega, CLTI Coordinator & CLTI Team

PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATES

Kirstin Pryor

ALUMNI GREETINGS

Elizabeth Maxwell | Alumni Advisory Council Members

COHORT 13 CLASS SPEAKER

Jaime Briscoe

DIRECTOR'S REMARKS

Luva Alvarez

CLOSING & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

2026 GUEST SPEAKER

Stephanie Paredes



Stephanie Paredes is a dedicated DEIB (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging) Operations Manager at Coordinated Care Services, Inc., committed to fostering inclusive and equitable environments where people and communities feel seen, valued, and supported. She is a creative thinker, and proud Afro-Dominican solo mom to her incredible 9-years-young son, Alejandro.

While Stephanie brings passion and purpose to her work—focusing on community, identity, and creating more inclusive spaces—her most important role is being a Mami. She navigates the balance of career and parenting with tenacity, humor, and deep intention, showing up every day to support, nurture, and advocate for her son. Her motherhood and her womanhood are distinct, yet equally powerful forces that shape who she is.

ADVICE FOR OUR PARENT LEADER GRADUATES:

“Don’t measure your path against someone else’s—you’re not working from the same story. You don’t know all they’ve carried, and they don’t know all you’ve overcome. Your journey is yours to shape, at your own pace, by your own rules.”

~Stephanie Paredes

2026 PARENT LEADER GRADUATES COHORT 13



ALYSSA BARAJAS



JUAN BARAJAS



**ANA PILAR
RAMOS BENITEZ**



JAMIE BRISCO



ORLANA COLLINS



ZYMEREIA DANIELS



KRYSTAL DAVIS



NAISHAH EBANKS



KARA GEORGI



KAMSINYA HALL



SAMSON HALL



JEZARE HOOD



VICKIE MASON



CHRISSY MILLER



CHRISTIAN SERRANO



SARA TAYLOR



JAMES THORMAN

PLTI came into my life at the right time. I would say it helped me find myself again. I truly enjoyed the challenges and the discomfort that I had to accept in order to grow. This experience has given me a wealth of knowledge and strong networking abilities. It has amplified my ability to speak up, listen deeply, and stand in my own truth so that I can stand in unity with others. PLTI is a stepping tool for my elevation and continued growth. I'm walking away from this experience more confident, more aware, and more prepared to show up not only for myself, but for my family and my community.

~Jamie Briscoe
Cohort 13 Parent Leader

2026 PARENT LEADER PROJECTS

Name	Project name	Project Description
Juan Barajas	Not my project, project.	Immigrant, refugee, & new American advocacy for dignity and pluralism.
Alyssa Barajas	The Potluck Project	A community-led initiative in Rochester's 19th Ward that brings neighbors together in homes to share meals, build trust and strengthen civic engagement. Through shared learning and mutual aid, the project builds real relationships while developing a replicable model and resource library so others can host inclusive gatherings and grow connected communities of their own.
Ana Pilar Ramos Benitez	School Bus Safety & Transportation	Advocating initiatives for all measures of safety and security for all children. Having the bus equipped with seatbelts, cameras in addition to bus monitors to support our youth as they travel.
Jamie Brisco	Thyself Campground	Help our youth heal out loud through nature, community, and trust. Thyself Academy Campground creates a safe space where young people can grow, build confidence, and experience healing in nature.
Orlana Collins	Crown & Confidence	A youth-centered project designed to educate and empower young people about hair care, self-confidence, and cultural pride. The project teaches youth how to properly care for their hair, understand different hair types, and appreciate the beauty of natural hair. Through workshops, demonstrations, and mentorship, participants learn healthy hair practices, styling basics, and the importance of self-love.
Zymereia Daniels	Ruth's Sacred Garden	A community-centered initiative dedicated to nurturing growth, healing, and connection. Rooted in compassion and collective care, the project creates safe spaces where individuals can gather, give back, and grow together. Through outreach events, donation drives, and creative engagement, Ruth's Sacred Garden aims to cultivate unity, support those facing hardship, and plant seeds of lasting change within the community.
Krystal Davis	Heal the Heart	Domestic violence awareness and safety.
Naishah Ebanks	The Independence Project	Where basic life skills meet financial literacy and emotional wellness.
Kara Georgi	Dream BIG Education Toolkit	A resource to help families and the community build hope, strengths, connection, and belonging. It will be available electronically as well as in printed form for libraries and schools. The goal of this toolkit is to encourage conversations and connections that recognize that everyone has something to offer and we are stronger together.
Kamsinya Hall	Count On Parents Math Tutoring for Parents	Math tutoring to aid parents in helping their children improve math skills.
Samson Hall	Timeout for the Student Voice	Periodic opportunity for a student representative to speak about concerns to the school board.
Jezare Hood	Hood Family	Children's necessities & clothes giveaway with bracelets for hope.
Vickie Mason	Get Up Stand Up	Advocate for civil rights.
Chrissy Miller	Gated Community for Special Meeds Families	A Community for families of children with disabilities.
Christian Serrano	Community Urban Farm	This project is to convert a vacant city lot by not only beautifying it but also trying to eliminate food deserts in the city.
Sara Taylor	Family Resource Drop in Center	Holistic family Education Resource Hub open to all regardless of insurance.
James Thorman	Youth Leadership Capstone Campaign	Create an agenda enabling surviving parents of lost children to join county community services boards. Source data allowing civilian and Military master social workers a BRIDGE to focus group moderating in mental and social WellBeing.

2026 CLTI YOUTH LEADER GRADUATES

**DONOVAN BARAJAS
DANTE BARAJAS
DEVAUGHN BARAJAS
IMMANUEL J. BRISCO-MARASCO
ZENDAYA BRUCE
ZORIAH BRUCE
BELLA MARIE GARCIA**

**JAZ'ELLS HOOD
HAYLEX SEYDONA HOOD
INEA MASON
BRAXTON MILLER
JAICEON MOORE
SAGE WALL**



Congratulations to this cohort of child leaders! Your journey as a child leader is just beginning. You now have the skills and knowledge needed to navigate and change the world.

BELIEVE THAT YOU CAN.

BELIEVE THAT YOU WILL.

BELIEVE THAT YOUR POWER IS UNSTOPPABLE.

NOTES FROM THE COMMUNITY

Congratulations, Cohort 13!



“Your dedication to leadership, advocacy, and community empowerment is truly inspiring. Here’s to the impact you’ll continue to make in shaping a brighter future for families and communities. Well done!”



Senator Samra
Brouk

Address: 274 N. Goodman St,
Rochester, NY 14607
Phone Number: 585-223-1800
Email: brouk@nysenate.gov



Congratulations

Kara Georgi and the Greater Rochester PLTI Cohort 13

*Together, we are building bridges to support
parents becoming leaders of change!*

Congratulations Cohort 13 Graduates!



Voices of Impact: Families Leading Change



As a proud partner to Greater Rochester PLTI, CCSI celebrates your dedication to parent leadership and change in the community!

*Congratulations,
Cohort 13!*

MANCINI
PUBLIC RELATIONS
Storytelling that moves people.

ALUMNI COUNCIL ADVISORY BOARD

This year, as part of our strategic plan implementation, Greater Rochester PLTI launched an Alumni Council to serve in an advisory role to the PLTI team and CDT, while strengthening connections among our growing network of parent leaders and advancing our shared mission. The inaugural members of this council are:

- Nicole Pope, Cohort 7 alumna
- Eva Wood, Cohort 12 alumna
- Robert Rodgers, Sr., Cohort 11 alumnus
- Elizabeth Maxwell, PLTI Alumni Coordinator and Cohort 8 graduate



**Cohort 14 Applications
are now open!**

Classes begin in October.
www.greaterrochesterplti.org

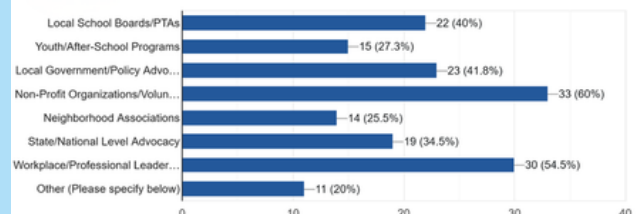
**Ready to Make Change
Happen? Apply Today.**



The Council recently led a “phonathon,” connecting with PLTI alumni to gather insights on the program’s continued impact, understand how we can better support alumni parent leaders, and identify meaningful ways to keep them engaged.

Below is a graph illustrating responses to one of the outreach questions.

In which areas are you currently applying the skills and knowledge gained from PLTI? (Select all that apply)



PLTI'S NATIONAL HISTORY

The Greater Rochester Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) is a local initiative of the National Parent Leadership Institute (NPLI), an evidence-based program designed to increase parent involvement in community issues. Since PLTI began in Connecticut in 1992, the program has grown nationally. The Monroe County-based Early Childhood Development Initiative worked to bring PLTI to the Rochester community, which began as Greater Rochester PLTI in 2012.

Many thanks to NPLI for their collaboration with towns and regions across the country to implement quality parent leadership for good child outcomes.

2025-2026 PLTI CLASS FACILITATORS

Kirstin Pryor
Russell Nordquist

Lydia Riveria
Matt Wagstaff

THE CHILDREN'S LEADERSHIP TRAINING INSTITUTE

The Children's Leadership Training Institute (CLTI) is an organic bridge for parents and children that focuses on family, empowerment, and improving the community. It runs as a parallel course to PLTI for the children of cohort participants. Anchored in literacy, the Children's Leadership Cohort creates a full spectrum of activities to encompass multiple intelligences.

2025 - 2026 CLTI TEAM

Alexandra Addis - CLTI Teacher
Silas Alvarez - Youth Leader
Nhaziah Bedell-Scott - Youth Leader
Tyler Benson - CLTI Teacher

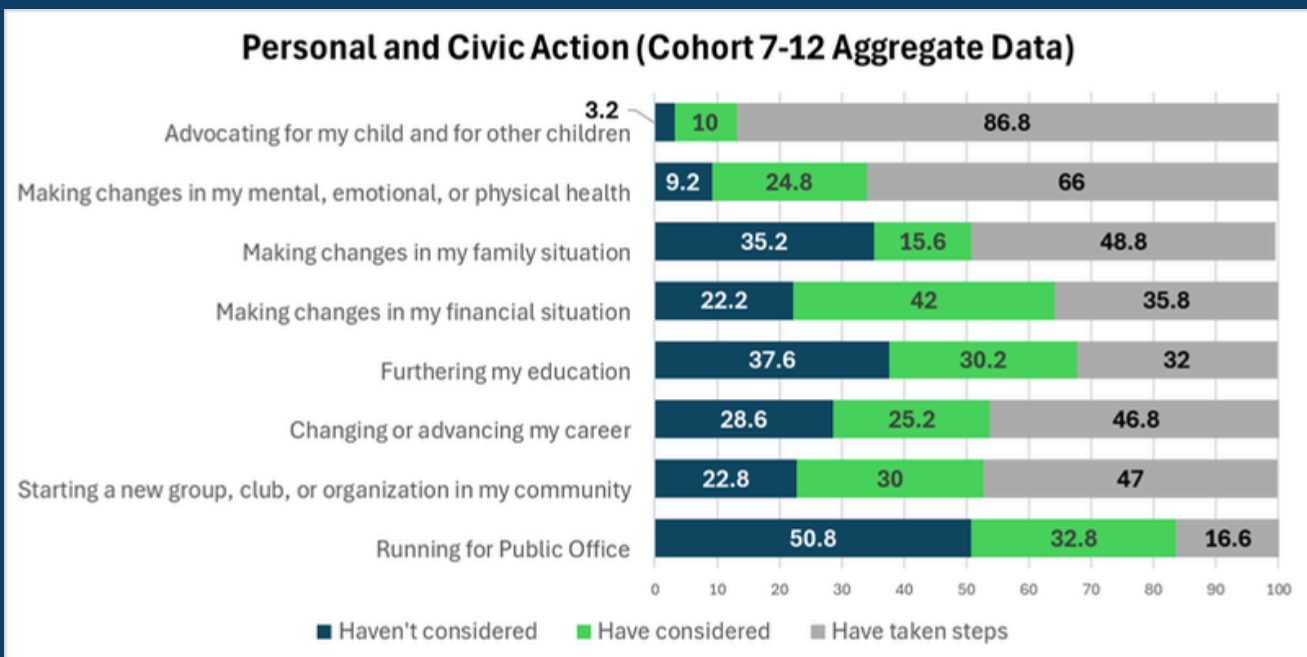
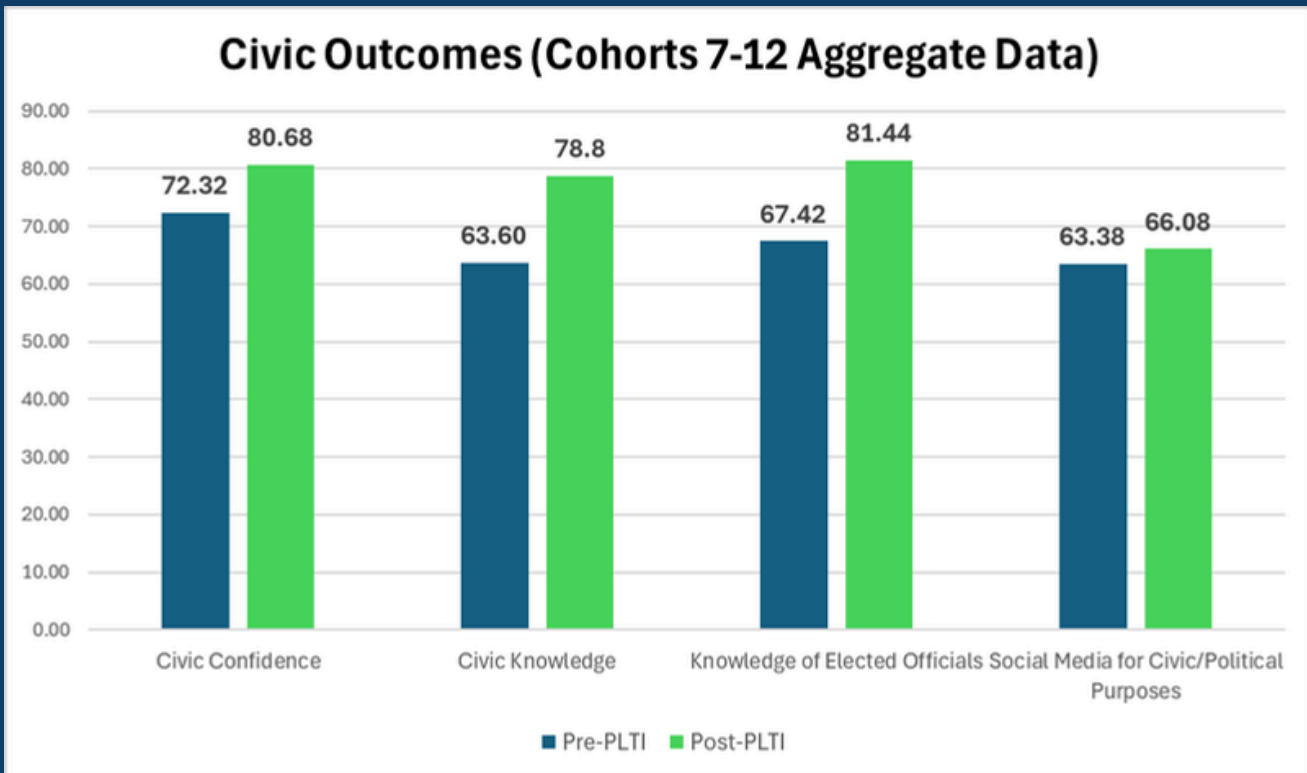
Julia Gonzalez - CLTI Teacher
Destiny Dalmau Gonzalez - Youth Leader
Mildrena Vega - CLTI Coordinator

GREATER ROCHESTER PLTI STAFF

Luva Alvarez, Director (Cohort 1 Alumna)
Cheryl Wearen, Site Coordinator (Cohort 11 Alumna)
Elizabeth Maxwell, Alumni and Mentor Coordinator (Cohort 8 Alumna)

HOW PLTI IMPACTS PARENT LEADERS

NYU Metro Center was hired by NPLI as an independent, outside evaluator to assess outcomes of the PLTI program, including conducting a parent survey. The survey measures the impact of the initiative on parents' civic skills, engagement, and knowledge, as well as their experiences with the initiative. Surveys were completed at the beginning and the end of the program. While Cohort 13's final data will not be available until this summer, below is the composite data for some of the measured outcomes for Cohorts 7-12. For more information, visit greaterrochesterplti.org



ACKNOWLEDGING OUR SENIORS

As two of our CLTI youth leaders graduate and prepare to begin their college journey, we celebrate their leadership, insight, and the commitment they have already shown as leaders in our community.

Silas and Destiny - your voices matter, your impact is real, and we look forward to seeing the meaningful change you will continue to create in the years ahead.

Good Luck

Special Message from CLTI Coordinator Mildrena Vega:



Destiny, It has been my pleasure to witness your leadership journey. Your leadership isn't found in grand gestures, but in the consistent kindness and reliability you bring to every challenge. I can't wait to see the incredible things you'll achieve!

Silas, It has been my honor to watch you grow from a curious child into a kind, driven young adult. Your ability to lead with empathy and understanding sets you apart, and I have no doubt that you will continue to make a positive impact in your next chapter.



SPECIAL THANKS TO

- Asbury First United Methodist Church
- 2025 Class Speakers Nikki Carroll; Chloe Dervin; Miguel Melendez; Judge Fatimat Reid; Vivica Smith; Stephannie Townsend; Cynshei' Wilson
- Guest Speaker Stephanie Paredes
- Kimberly Jones (Alumna, Cohort 1) & the MAG Events Team
- Local caterers who provided weekly meals
- Mancini Public Relations for assistance with the program
- 2026 PLTI Parent Leader Mentors
- National Parent Leadership Institute
- Photographers Maria Flecha (Cohort 4)
- Printing Plus
- Starbridge
- The Children's Institute
- The Child Advocacy Center
- READY Inc.

**“NEVER DOUBT THAT A SMALL GROUP OF THOUGHTFUL,
COMMITTED CITIZENS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD; INDEED,
IT'S THE ONLY THING THAT EVER HAS.”**

~Margaret Mead

THANK YOU TO OUR 2025-2026 PLTI FUNDERS

- Black Giving Collective at Rochester Area Community Foundation
- Sen. Samra Brouk & NYS OCFS
- City of Rochester
- ESL Charitable Foundation
- FULL MEASURE
- Greater Rochester Health Foundation
- Konar Foundation

**WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF OUR FUNDERS AND
THE MANY INDIVIDUAL DONORS WHO HAVE GIVEN TO PLTI THIS YEAR.**